United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in Presidential statement, stresses inviolability of Iraq's boundary with Kuwait, as demarcated by Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Commission.

+ United States tells Security Council its attack on Iraqi intelligence headquarters was proportionate response to attempted assassination of former President Bush; says attempt was attack on United States, and response was act of self-defence.

+ World Conference on Human Rights adopts "Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action", reaffirming that human rights have universal character and are legitimate international concerns; recommends that General Assembly consider issue of high commissioner for human rights.

+ Secretary-General leaves Cairo, having addressed OAU Summit, for Geneva, to address Economic and Social Council; has meetings with many African Heads of State.

+ Secretary-General expresses outrage at right-wing display of force against delegates at multi-party talks in South Africa; reiterates call to all South Africans to renounce violence.

+ Secretary-General, in message on International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, says illicit drugs are major challenge to international peace and security.

+ General Assembly President, on official visit to Italy, meets with President Scalfaro; is received in audience by Pope John Paul II.

+ United Nations Seminar and Symposium discuss issues relating to settlement of Palestine question at Headquarters this week.

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For information media--not an official record

The Security Council, in a statement read out by its President, Juan Antonio Yañez-Barnuevo (Spain), today noted with particular concern the letter of 6 June from Iraq's Foreign Minister to the Secretary-General concerning resolution 833 (1993). (That letter challenged the work of the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Commission and said the Council had no right to impose a boundary delimitation on a Member State.)

The Council recalled that the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Commission had not reallocated territory between Kuwait and Iraq, but had simply carried out the technical tasks necessary to demarcate the precise coordinates for the first time, on the basis of the 1963 Agreed Minutes signed by both countries. The Council reminded Iraq that the Commission had acted on the basis of resolution 687 (1991) and the Secretary-General's report dealing with its implementation, both of which had been formally accepted by Iraq. In resolution 833 (1993), the Council had reaffirmed that the Commission's decisions were final, and demanded that Iraq and Kuwait respect the inviolability of the international boundary as demarcated by the Commission and the right to navigational access.

The Council also reminded Iraq of its acceptance of resolution 687 (1991), which formed the basis for the cease-fire after the Gulf War. The Council stressed to Iraq the inviolability of its boundary with Kuwait, demarcated by the Commission and guaranteed by Council resolutions 687 (1991), 773 (1992) and 833 (1993), and the serious consequences that would ensure from any breach thereof.

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The United States has said that its military attack on Iraqi intelligence service headquarters in Baghdad on Saturday was a proportionate response to the service's attempted assassination of former President George Bush in Kuwait last April. The attempted assassination was an attack on the United States, and the response was an act of self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, the country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, told the Security Council yesterday. The Council was meeting at the urgent request of the United States.

Ms. Albright told the Council that while President Bush was visiting Kuwait on 14 April, Kuwaiti authorities had thwarted a terrorist operation against him. After a meticulous investigation, the United States had concluded that it had been planned, equipped and launched by Iraq. She went on to say that while Saturday's incident was an issue between Iraq and the United States, it should lead all nations to redouble their resolve to ensure that Baghdad's criminal regime was never again able to disturb the peace.

Iraq said the United States had violated its position as a permanent member of the Council; the attack on Baghdad was part of the American policy of aggression to subjugate Iraq and was designed for political ends. Iraq had denied any part in the alleged assassination attempt and the United States had no right to overlook the due process of law, he said.

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A number of representatives supported the action by the United States, while China, expressing regret at the loss of civilian lives in Iraq, said disputes should be settled through dialogue.

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The World Conference on Human Rights, which was held in Vienna from 14 to 25 June, adopted by consensus the "Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action", which reaffirmed the universal character of human rights, and that human rights were a legitimate concern of the international community. It established the inter-relationship between democracy, development and human rights, and reaffirmed the obligation of States to take special measures concerning special groups, such as women and children.

In the Programme, the Conference requested that the United Nation centre for Human Rights be strengthened, its financial and staff resources increased, and the mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights made more efficient. It recommended that the General Assembly, at its forty-eighth session, consider as a matter of priority the question of the establishment of a United Nations high commissioner for human rights. It also encouraged the International Law Commission to continue its work on an international criminal court.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today left Cairo, where he had addressed the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit, for Geneva, where he would address a meeting of the Economic and Social Council.

In his address to the OAU Summit, the Secretary-General highlighted the importance of a sincere commitment to self-democratization. While progress could not be taken for granted, the general trend towards self-democratization in Africa had been positive and encouraging. He stressed the need for strengthening regional structures, developing human resources and diversifying economies, and noted that Africa, more than any other region, displayed the vast range of United Nations activities for peace, democracy and development.

In Cairo yesterday, the Secretary-General had meetings with many African Heads of State and other officials. He discussed the deployment of the United Nations Observer Force Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR) with the President of Rwanda, developments in South Africa with South African leader Nelson Mandela, and the Middle East peace talks and the economic situation in the occupied territories with Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat. On Saturday, the Secretary-General met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, with whom he discussed numerous African issues. The Secretary-General said he had sent a letter to the Heads of State of the Group of Seven industrialized countries before their forthcoming summit seeking support for African problems.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed outrage at the brazen display of force by members of the right-wing Afrikaner National Front (ANF) against delegates attending multi-party talks in South Africa aimed at facilitating the transition to a non-racial, democratic and united country.

The Secretary-General, in a statement issued by a spokesman yesterday, said that progress in the talks threatened elements that espoused racist policies. He stressed that the vast majority of South Africans were committed to peace, equality and democracy, and had the support of the international community. He reiterated his call to all South Africans to renounce violence and called on them to commit themselves to the negotiation process.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said that one of the most insidious and far-reaching challenges to international peace and security is illicit drug production, trafficking and consumption. Hardly a country or community had been spared the effects of drugs, he said on Saturday in a message for the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Preventive action must become a crucial element in the elimination of drug abuse, the Secretary-General said. The United Nations had laid the foundations for a more effective strategy in drug-abuse control, and its International Drug Control Programme was the focal point for the Decade against Drug Abuse (1991 to 2000). He called on all Governments, international organizations and civil society to take concerted action to tackle drug abuse.

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General Assembly President Stoyan Ganev (Bulgaria), on an official visit to Italy, met today with the country's President, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro. They discussed the evolution of United Nations peace-keeping operations, particularly regarding the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II). Mr. Ganev was received in an audience by Pope John Paul II, and was afterwards received by Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State of the Holy See.

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Priorities for United Nations action and for the second decade of the non-governmental organizations movement are the themes of the Ninth United Nations North American Seminar and the Tenth United Nations North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, being held at Headquarters this week.

Both events have been organized by the Committee on the Exercise on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, as part of its efforts to promote a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Seminar is being held today and tomorrow, and will be followed by the Symposium, which will end on Friday. The topics of discussion will be the United Nations and the implementation of international human rights instruments and relevant Security Council resolutions; the United Nations and the promotion of the economic development of occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem; and the United Nations and the peace process.

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